178 We can add to that also a large number of black women who became
583 the famous "housekeepers" of the Europeans. Although payment for these women was usually given to their owners, they were still withdrawn from the family life and the native customs. Finally, the Christian women, who now live in Christian marriage, must also be mentioned.

In addition, the price of wives and the bride price have [544] undergone great changes, primarily in those districts where the natives came into more immediate contact with Europeans. Before the arrival of the Europeans, their main medium of payment was the woman herself; a woman was paid for with a woman. Now it is forbidden to use women as currency. Therefore the natives have raised the price in the payment of bakonga and mitako.

118 In some districts close to the European centers, the natives
583 have brought the price for wives and the bride price to a height
435 never before known. For one wife they ask several nkesi.

A nkesi is 10,000 mitako. Such a sum is much too high in relation to their means. In a village there are, for instance, 50 women; for one woman, 40,000 to 50,000 mitako are asked, while at present in the whole village together the sum of 50,000 mitako is no more to be found. Therefore to oblige someone to pay two or three nkesi is usually to make it impossible for him to pay, or rather to make it necessary for him to pay with women, which is nothing else than encouraging woman trade, which then occurs.

802 A remark should also be made here about the nomenclature
177 of the numerals. Nkesi is not a word of the Equatorial peoples; it was brought in from elsewhere with the Europeans. Their amounts were as follows:

10 was jum or bonkama;

100 was nkoto; and with the arrival of the Whites and foreign population came

1,000 nkesi.

The present numerical value is: 10, jum; 100, bonkama; 1,000, nkoto; and 10,000, nkesi. Some very old Negroes, however, still say bonkama for 10.

[583] This is the probable origin of the great rise in price of wives, especially in the area of Coquilhatville.

178 When the first Europeans arrived at Leopoldville and
439 Brazzaville, it was not long before European materials and other
583 articles also came to Coquilhatville to the hands of the great village chiefs who carried on trade on the rivers, primarily in slaves and ivory. The village chiefs, Yoma from the village of Boyeka, Ibuka of Boyere, Yamba of [545] Eala, Nkake of Bokele, etc., carried these European articles up the Tshuapa and Ikelemba rivers, and they bought slaves and wives with them.

Returning home again, they bought wives from their own district and paid for them with the slaves and women whom they themselves had bought cheaply with the European articles. For one woman of their district they paid three or four women. The arrival
803 of the Whites and foreign Blacks acquainted them with the number nkesi which, however, in their definition was only 1,000 and which they formerly called 10 nkoto or 10 times 100.

178 It was not long before the Europeans had to concern themselves
583 with hearing disputes over the wives. In the Black land such a thing is unavoidable. Whenever the Blacks came to the Whites with their disputes, they dared not or would not say, "I paid for this woman with three women, but they said, "I paid for this woman with three nkesi," that is, 3 times 1,000 mitako. Meanwhile, the nkoto and nkesi acquired their value of 1,000 and 10,000. The statement, however, that a woman was paid for with nkesi was retained, through the error of the Whites or through the greed of the polygynists or both. Indeed, later some women were paid for with nkesi, namely, when the prevalent currency in the Congo was the mitako. It was also no wonder, for the polygynists had a monopoly on the wives, and it was to their advantage to raise the price.

Therefore, if the native of Coquilhatville says now that his father or his uncle paid for that woman with three or four nkesi, this generally means that the wife was paid for with three or four women. The price of the women in Wangata, near Coquilhatville, was formerly no higher than in the other areas. Many women were paid for with only five bekonga, for instance, in Bokala, near Bamania, a village which belonged to the village chief Yoma of Boyeka.

178 It should also be noted that the nkesi which have been paid
583 in recent years in Wangata have been paid not in mitako or in
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